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TheHighlander

Thursday April 16 2026 | Issue 735

INSIDE: COMMUNITY SAYS 'NO' TO BYOB PAGE 5 FREE

James Smith loads sandbags onto his trailer in Minden April 14. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Minden Hills declares state of emergency

By Lisa Gervais

Minden Hills resident James Smith loaded as many sandbags as he could onto a trailer outside the Minden Curling Club April 14.

He lives on the Burnt River.

"The river side is higher than it's ever been, and I'm worried because the water actually gets into our house from the back side of our property. This is the first time we've had water this high on the property and it's actually coming into the house," he told *The Highlander.*

He said the previous owners built a berm and the water has now breached it.

"I know we're going to get through it. It is a temporary inconvenience."

The Township of Minden Hills declared a state of emergency April 14 in response to flood conditions, and the escalating impact to community and infrastructure. The decision came as the water level on the Gull River increased, and continued rain and warmer temperatures are expected over the next five to 10 days.

Levels on the Burnt and Irondale rivers, along with many County lakes, are also high.

There is water over numerous roads. Voicey Road was closed between Tulip and Blairhampton roads, Buller Road was closed at Clear Lake Road; and Boyd Road was closed at Brady Lake Road. There were restrictions on Invergordon Avenue, with access available through the arena back entrance; Anson Street, McKnight Boulevard, Orde Street and Hospitality Road; Devil's Lake Road was reduced to one lane to local traffic only; Upper Dutch Line Road had washouts.

On April 13, a portion of Bobcaygeon Road from Winding Creek Road to Scotch Line Road, was closed to through traffic due to localized flooding and washout.

The township advised people not to drive through washouts or flooded areas as these conditions may be unstable and dangerous.

The municipality also said April 14 that the Minden sewage treatment system was receiving higher than normal flows, exceeding the capacity of the system. The Ontario Clean Water Agency, the township's wastewater operator, commenced bypass

Continued **'Sandbags'** on page 2

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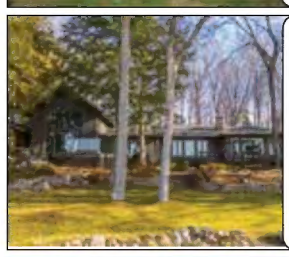

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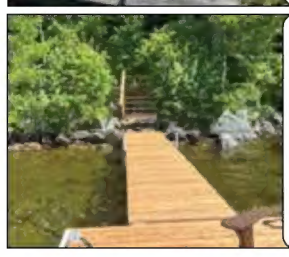

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SPECIALIZING IN WATERFRONT PROPERTIES

Michael Stinson helped sandbagging efforts. *Submitted.* Inset: A washout on Bobcaygeon Road between Winding Creek and Scotch Line Road. *Facebook.*

Sandbags available for residents

Continued from page 1

procedures. Sewage had to be pumped to the Gull River from the sewage pumping station 1 at 27 Orde St. The township said the spill was initiated to reduce the risk of sewage backups into private property. "The impact … will be minimal given the dilution from the significant rainfall event, however residents drawing water downstream of the Orde Street sewage pumping station should take precautions, using proper filtration and disinfection systems before consuming the water."

Minden mayor Bob Carter asked the public to "stay alert, stay in contact with our website, we will have the latest information available there."

MNR: 'particular concern for the Gull River'

The Ministry of Natural Resources issued a flood warning until April 22, saying developing conditions will affect residents of Haliburton County – with particular concern for the Gull River in Minden.

The warning means flooding is imminent or occurring within specific watercourses and municipalities.

"Residents and visitors should expect lake water levels to continue to rise and river flows to remain high throughout the week of April 13-17 and into the weekend of April 18-19," the ministry said.

Runoff into local lakes and rivers is expected to increase due to rain and warming temperatures contributing to higher lake water levels and river flows.

"Residents are reminded to keep a close watch on weather conditions, regularly check for updated messages, exercise caution near fast-moving rivers and streams, and maintain close supervision of children and pets," the MNR said.

It added, "residents that have been affected by high water and flow conditions in the past should continue to take necessary action to protect and secure any vulnerable property in proximity to rivers and lakes and closely monitor developing conditions."

The township has filled sandbags, and self-serve sand (bring a shovel) is available at the Minden Curling Club (50 Prentice St., Minden) parking lot. The army cadets volunteered to fill bags. They said they would have up-to-date information at www.mindenhills.ca/news.

The township also encouraged people to check their sump pumps to make sure they are working, that the pit is clear of debris and all electrical connections are plugged in correctly. Make sure that it is directed to a high point on your property that doesn't redirect back into the home.

OPP Central Region Headquarters also issued a warning April 14, reminding drivers wet roads, reduced visibility, pooling water, localized flooding, and the potential for dense fog in some areas can make driving hazardous when conditions can change quickly.

"Significant rainfall is expected to persist over the coming days, increasing the risk of water collecting on roadways, washouts, debris, and sudden road closures. These conditions may develop rapidly and can be difficult to predict, particularly in rural areas."

Before leaving home, they encouraged drivers to check current road conditions, closures, and travel advisories through 511on.ca and municipal511.ca, monitor localized weather forecasts through The Weather Network, and follow OPP Central Region social media channels for timely updates on active road closures.

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Fleming to merge with St. Lawrence

By Lisa Gervais

The newly-merged Fleming and St. Lawrence colleges say there will be no immediate changes to local brands, programs, campuses, services, or student supports following an April 10 integration announcement.

It is not yet known what impact the move will have on Haliburton School of Art + Design (HSAD), which recently had its dean position eliminated.

It was business as usual at HSAD's open house April 11 although there appeared to be fewer students on the day and some studios closed. One staff person said the merger had caught them off guard.

Meanwhile, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), which represents staff, slammed the merger as a consequence of the Ontario government failing to invest in the sector.

In a joint press release, the colleges said they had agreed to integrate as equal partners, beginning a formal process "to create a stronger institution with greater scale, broader access for students to programs and services, and improved long-term financial sustainability.

They added the integration will also "better align programs and capacity with regional labour market needs. Over time, students will benefit from expanded academic pathways, increased access to specialized programs, enhanced research opportunities, and broader work-integrated learning experiences."

They said the colleges had been working closely with the provincial government to ensure a smooth integration with minimum impacts on students and communities.

Fleming interim president Theresa Knott said, "this integration represents a forward-looking investment in our students and communities. By bringing our strengths together, we are positioning ourselves to deliver more opportunities, more innovation, greater access, and a stronger foundation for the future across our combined regions and campuses."

The boards of both colleges have approved an integration framework agreement that sets out the steps to a full integration. Last Friday's announcement marked the beginning of that process.

Fleming board chair, Don Gillespie, said, "as governors, our responsibility is to help ensure our institutions remain strong, relevant and sustainable for the students and each of the communities we serve. This integration process reflects a thoughtful, long-term approach to building greater capacity, expanding opportunities, and protecting the strength of college education across our region."

Islay Bourne sweat-solders jewelry at the Haliburton School of Art + Design open house April 11 – a day after Fleming College and St. Lawrence College announced a merger. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

The new college will have a single management team. St. Lawrence president Glenn Vollebregt will serve as the initial president and CEO and Knott as the initial associate president and chief academic officer.

The colleges said the integration will proceed through the next phase of implementation, which includes "detailed due diligence, operational planning, and community engagement.

"These steps will be undertaken under board oversight and in line with provincial requirements, with further updates to be shared as more information becomes available. Both colleges are committed to a structured engagement process that will give key partners meaningful opportunities to provide input on implementation."

Union reacts

On April 11, OPSEU said the announcement sent ripples across the union representing college faculty and support staff as more than 2,500 delegates convened for their annual union convention.

President JP Hornick said, "just as we warned that without provincial investment, college campuses would begin to close – and they did – we cautioned that mergers were on the horizon.

"This government has clearly demonstrated an agenda to gut public services and education, so we know how this story ends: more cuts, and less support for students and communities."

President of Local 351 representing Fleming College support staff, Marcia Steeves, said union locals at both colleges were not consulted in advance.

"For months, government officials and college presidents have sidelined direct questions about their plans for our colleges," Steeves said.

Hornick challenged the consolidation as neither inevitable nor necessary, drawing attention back to the provincial spending choices.

"When it comes to corporate bailouts, luxury spas, or speeding up alcohol privatization, there's billions in public dollars to subsidize private interests. But when it comes to our public colleges, something we universally benefit from, premier Doug Ford always comes up dry."

Steeves added, "resources are being drained from our communities, especially small and rural ones, in real-time."

Hornick said they would fight any job cuts.

To follow the progress of the integration process, people can go to flemingcollege.ca/integration and stlawrencecollege.ca/integration.

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Highlander news

Algonquin Highlands finalizes tax hike

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Township of Algonquin Highlands is moving forward with a nine per cent increase to its municipal levy following the presentation of the 2026 final draft budget.

During the April 2 regular council meeting, elected officials approved the financial plan - $643,357 in additional spending this year. With the total tax rate, which includes combined rates for the County and education, residents will see a 5.54 per cent increase on their combined tax bill. This represents an approximate increase of $45 per year for every $100,000 of property assessment.

Council and staff outlined a budget that balances a surge in infrastructure spending with cost-saving measures in local facilities.

The single largest driver of the budget is the transportation department, with its total budget climbing by more than 50 per cent to reach $4,031,678. Spending on roads alone is jumping to $3,694,610, a more than 60 per cent increase over the 2025 approved budget. However, the airport operations budget is being scaled back by about 43 per cent this year to $57,900.

The Dorset Recreation Centre saw its operating budget cut by over 20 per cent to $322,283. *File.*

Public safety and regulatory services account for $2,486,795 of the 2026 budget. With Ontario Provincial Police service costs continuing to rise with an 11 per cent increase this year, bringing the total to $1,126,635. Meanwhile, the fire department's operational budget is being slashed by just over 11 per cent, totalling $639,750 for the year.

Budgeted at $15,110 for the coming year, the short-term rental program is seeing a significant drop compared to the $78,247 actually spent on the program in 2025. And the new septic program has a dedicated budget of $149,443 this year.

To help offset infrastructure and public safety costs, several recreational and community facilities will operate with reduced funding. Spending for all facilities has been reduced to $1,106,065, a 16.68 per cent drop from previous levels. The Dorset Recreation Centre saw its operating budget cut by over 20 per cent to $322,283. Perhaps the most dramatic shift in the budget is the withdrawal of funding for general cemetery maintenance. The budget was slashed by nearly 83 per cent, falling from a previous $10,265 to $1,750.

The budget was the result of three days of deliberations in February and March. During the final summary, staff noted that while various projects were adjusted during those talks, no major "law changes" were required for the final draft.

Council approved the budget and directed staff to prepare the formal tax rate bylaw, which is expected to be brought forward for official adoption at the regular meeting of council on April 16.

Highlands rejects outdoor alcohol at cultural events

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Community leaders in the County are rejecting the provincial government's further loosening of alcohol restrictions that would allow people to bring their own drinks to outdoor cultural and community events.

Last month, the Doug Ford government announced that it is expanding tailgate-style permits to include events like farmers' markets, concerts, and art festivals, allowing organizers to apply for bring your own booze (BYOB) permits. This would allow attendees to bring and consume their own alcoholic beverages in designated areas.

"Starting this spring, Ontario is giving communities more flexibility to safely and responsibly enjoy cultural and outdoor events," Attorney general Doug Downey said in a statement. "The 'bring-your-own' event permits will help save attendees money, lower overhead costs for event organizers, and contribute to local economies."

The government said that municipalities that haven't already done so must enact bylaws to allow drinking in public spaces. The townships will also have to determine whether an event qualifies as a community or cultural gathering, starting April 30.

All four municipalities in the County indicated to *The Highlander* that they are in no rush to move forward, noting that "staff will be reviewing the information and providing a report to council in the near future; however, the council meeting date has not been determined at this time."

From art festivals to service clubs, local Haliburton leaders and organizers said they have no interest in BYOB permits. For Laurie Jones, of Rails End Gallery and organizer of Haliburton Art and Craft Festival, and Mike Landry, president of Haliburton Rotary, the provincial policy feels like a solution in search of a problem. Both community members lead popular summer events at Head Lake Park, which have long operated as alcohol-free zones.

Haliburton's community staples aren't drinking the spiked Kool-Aid. *File.*

"I reached out to the whole club, and the response was that it's not really something we want to do because our events are all family-oriented," Landry told *The Highlander*. "There are a lot of kids who come out. We don't want to do anything to turn people off."

Jones echoed the sentiment, noting that a tailgate atmosphere is a stark contrast to an outdoor art festival.

"It's not exactly an art fair experience," she said. "There's no compelling reason for someone to need a beer to have a conversation with an artist."

While bylaws have yet to be passed or even presented to townships, it seems the public has already started to push back against the idea, according to the Rotary Club.

"We've had one person call the organizer of our music in the park and say, 'Is this something you're going to be doing? Because we hope you don't," Landry said.

"The reaction from most Rotarians was the same. What we're doing now works."

For Jones, there's also the insurance issue. The cost of insuring 100 participating artists for the festival each requiring $2 million in liability, is already a massive undertaking.

"I hope we never have to test the policy," Jones said.

The gallery curator and executive director explained that the festival stopped selling alcohol years ago, specifically because insurance premiums for public park events were too high.

While the province claims that the modernization of the tailgate permits is an effort to help boost local economies, Haliburton's community staples aren't drinking the spiked Kool-Aid.

"I would not apply," Jones said.

"It's not really something that we would get into," Landry concluded.

Democracy project to share tips and tools

The Haliburton Highlands Healthy Democracy Project (HHHDP) is hosting the last of four events April 21 designed to prepare people to get more involved in this year's municipal election.

"We know that municipal government is the most accessible level of government for everyday people to be part of, and that we all benefit when good people run for office," said Lauren Hunter, a member of the HHHDP steering committee. "The democracy project wants to help demystify what it's like to actually do the job and equip people with the tools they need to help shape the future of our communities."

The final 'voices and votes' session, 'understanding campaigns: how success happens' will feature Hunter, who's a seasoned campaign strategist of more than 20 municipal, provincial, and federal campaigns. She will share the building blocks of a successful campaign, whether that's for elected office or for a cause people care about, along with practical tips and tools.

It will take place from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Stanhope Fire Fighters Community Hall in Algonquin Highlands.

The session is free, non-partisan, and open to all. Recordings and presentations from the first three sessions, focused on how government works, why it matters, how to get involved, and how to get inspired to step up for our community, are available on the HHHDP.ca website, and this session will also be recorded for those who can't attend in person.

"With the Oct. 26 municipal election fast approaching and 24 elected roles across the Haliburton Highlands needing candidates, we are focused on giving people the information and inspiration they need to get involved," said steering committee member Jessica Slade. "It's up to all of us, as a community, to strengthen our democracy together."

The HHHDP is a project of the Haliburton County Community Cooperative, and is grateful to be financially supported by HCDC (Local Initiatives Program) and the Telling Our Stories Speaker` Series. More information and registration are available at www.hhhdp.ca. *(Lisa Gervais)*

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Highlander news

Making herstory: Jill Lee points to a photo of her mother, Sylvia Battersby, a one-time nurse at the Wilberforce Red Cross Outpost. *File.*

Red Cross Outpost seeks lifeline

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

One of the County's historical landmarks, the Red Cross Outpost, is seeking a financial lifeline after a sudden shift in federal funding policy.

Members of the Wilberforce Heritage Guild appeared before Highlands East council on April 7 to request an emergency grant after losing their long-standing student staffing subsidy from the federal government.

"We're here because we have abruptly found out early this spring that we no longer meet the requirements to receive a federal Canada summer jobs grant," guild vice chair Joan Barton told council. "This means that the guild this year is short of the funds we need to cover the cost of our local student whom we hire each summer as the museum guide for the months of July and August."

Barton explained that the guild is facing a $4,000 shortfall as a result of the loss in funding. In previous years, the municipality processed the student guide's payroll, and the guild would reimburse the township once federal funds arrived. However, guild member Linda Cameron told council that the federal government now requires the guild to manage its own payroll.

"We have been told that we have to have a Revenue Canada payroll account number, which means we would have to process our own payroll. We don't have the wherewithal to do that," she said. "It makes no sense for one employee for nine weeks."

Cameron said that despite assistance from MP Jamie Schmale's office, the guild was told the decision was final, effectively closing that funding stream permanently.

The Wilberforce Red Cross Outpost served as the only medical provider in the region from 1922 to 1963 and was the first outpost opened by the Red Cross in Ontario. For more than 30 years, the guild, a volunteer-run charity, has partnered with the municipality to operate the site as a museum. In 2003, the outpost was designated a national historic site of Canada.

Aside from the historical aspect of the site, Cameron and Barton told council the building acts as a community hub.

"We draw visitors to the town all summer. We had approximately 300 this year from as far away as Europe and New Zealand," Barton said. "We run Scrabble afternoons because there should be fun for local people as well as the tourists".

The museum also hosts groups in the off-season, such as the Central Food Network (CFN) Foodbank, local church committees, and the Loop Troupe.

Council members expressed appreciation for the guild's work and while a final decision was deferred for a staff report, mayor Dave Burton indicated support.

"I believe in principle, I believe there's support there, but that will be totally up to council," he said.

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ADVERTORIAL

What I learned from a sparrow one summer

By Simon Payn

In the summer of 2020, when we were deep in Covid, I had to make a trip to the United States. When I got back home, I was put in quarantine for two weeks. Just me in the bunkie by the lake and meals in Tupperware.

The weather was lovely so I was able to work outside on the deck, under the shade of a white pine.

I learned about song sparrows that July. These unassuming brown birds, summer migrants here, spend their hours pecking in the undergrowth. But sometimes, they fly to a branch and sing.

Their song is easily recognized because it starts with three notes the same pitch. The rest can vary a little, but once you know the pattern, there's no mistaking it.

I got to know my song sparrow because it lived close to the bunkie. It felt at times like it was just me and the bird there, living our lives.

I started to pick out this individual's song and how it was different from the other sparrow that lived up the hill.

Then one day I noticed something else: it had its own voice with its own timbre. A kind of raspy tone.

I knew it like I know the voice of my mother the moment she calls.

Stuck

I was visiting friends and family in England the other week – two trips across the Atlantic in a triple seven. That's a lot of fossil fuel.

When I go to the landfill in Haliburton, the biggest bag is full of plastics. I throw them in the dumpster and hope they'll be recycled.

> Doing things differently is overwhelming so I just carry on. The caring continues so I just learn to tune it out.

These things bother me but I keep doing them.

It's not that I don't care – of course I do. But I'm kind of stuck. I care but then I go and do things that contradict the caring.

Doing things differently is overwhelming so I carry on. The caring continues so I just learn to tune it out.

Still

Covid changed me. When I was stuck at home, the rushing disappeared. I became still and noticed things I'd been living alongside but never noticed before.

A family of raccoons that ran up a maple when I startled them. The loon that slid by the end of the dock.

The moment I heard the voice of the song sparrow – not just the pretty tune but its actual voice – something changed.

I already knew birds and insects are important and that healthy shorelines keep our lakes healthy.

But I didn't decide to care about the shoreline the sparrow lived on because I had the data – I just started caring.

And while it didn't fix my dilemma with the fossil fuel and the plastics, it was somewhere I could put care into action.

Love

An ecological garden is a system full of individuals. Plants that grow, bloom, set seed and die. Caterpillars that become butterflies. Birds that gather twigs for their nests, sit on their eggs, feed bugs to their young, then see their fledglings grow up and fly away.

All these creatures arrive because there's something to attract them. Then they stay because there's something to stay for.

These are the things we notice.

A traditional lawn, on the other hand, looks the same every time. So you just stop looking and move on.

All a rich ecological landscape needs is for us to be still enough to notice.

Most of the time that summer, the song sparrow was foraging amid the honeysuckle. I noticed it would make a tutting sound every few seconds, keeping in touch with its mate.

Simon Payn owns Grounded, which designs, installs and cares for ecological gardens and shorelines. Visit groundedgardens.ca.

The Unfinished Cottage Landscape

By Simon Payn

You don't complete a cottage landscape. You enter it and stay with it.

This book is about what happens when you give up on done.

It's for anyone who has ever sighed getting out of the car on a Friday evening, looking at the work their landscaping needs.

And for anyone who suspects there might be a different way.

Visit groundedgardens.ca/unfinished

Editorial opinion

TheHighlander
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To tell the story of Haliburton County each week.

To be a source of information and inspiration through stories and ideas.

To report on issues, people and events important to the community.

To reflect and promote pride in the culture, people and landscape of The Highlands.

To encourage Highlanders to believe in themselves, in our community, and in their power to make our place in the world better every day.

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Talk to us

By Lisa Gervais

I was not completely surprised to hear the news that Fleming College had merged with St. Lawrence College.

It wasn't that long ago that Fleming eliminated the dean position at Haliburton School of Art + Desing (HSAD) and then unleashed the crickets. The interim college president and the board weren't talking.

Now, we know why. Their conversations were with the provincial government and St. Lawrence College – culminating in last week's integration announcement.

We knew something had to give at Fleming, which has campuses in Peterborough and Lindsay as well as in the Highlands.

It's well-known Ontario colleges have been struggling financially since the federal government capped the number of foreign students starting January 2024.

The Haliburton campus was the only Fleming-operated site to escape widespread program cuts after the limits were imposed. Twenty-nine programs in Peterborough and Lindsay were scrapped, with then Fleming president Maureen Adamson estimating the cap would mean a $40 million annual revenue loss for the college.

At its peak, the institution reported 4,000 of a total 7,200 students were international. Last March, a college spokesperson said the impact in Haliburton has been negligible but warned changes could be on the horizon.

The horizon is now here.

St. Lawrence College – which has campuses in Kingston, Brockville and Cornwall - was also bleeding financially.

Last January, it announced the suspension of intakes to programs at all three campuses beginning with the spring 2025 semester. In total, 55 program intakes were suspended, representing approximately 40 per cent of college programming.

Fifty-one of the programs were post-secondary degree, diploma, or credential programs, and four were apprenticeships. They included business, child and youth care, culinary, energy systems engineering, hairstyling, health information and hospitality, law clerk, media arts, mental wellness and addictions workers, police foundations, and tourism. Pretty fundamental stuff. One of the cuts at St. Lawrence was its visual and creative arts – program in Brockville.

We can blame the federal government for this forced amalgamation. We can probably blame the provincial government, too, for its failure to step up its funding. However, these types of mergers appear to be right up the Doug Ford-government alley. We've seen it with conservation authorities, and health units. Many municipal governments are starting to think about streamlining their operations, including here in Haliburton County.

I don't fault Fleming College or St. Lawrence College for merging. In actual fact, it is prudent with both struggling financially. It may save the two colleges. It might not save the current complement of staff. We anticipate there will be job cuts.

However, we can fault the two institutions for not talking to their people first. Discussions with union representatives and the employees they represent would have avoided last week's blindside. It is hard to be a loyal employee when you are constantly left in the dark about announcements. It is frustrating when bosses don't ask their workers if they have any ideas about making operations more fiscally feasible.

It is equally hard on communities – such as Haliburton County; a community that brought HSAD into being. We can only hope the purported community consultation actually comes about.

Spring's mess in bloom

By Adam Frisk

Ah, yes, it's that time of year again. The snow has finally started to retreat, revealing the soggy, mud-caked reality of our neighbourhoods. Our winter sins are now exposed for all to see.

While the grass is still recovering from the snow, and the tulips have yet to sprout, the infamous spring double-double perennials are in full bloom, with their bright red and white floral base, and deadheads discarded nearby.

I was at Skyline Park on Easter Sunday, hoping to take in the view on a somewhat mild afternoon. However, once I arrived, I was overwhelmed by the ugliness of what I saw. Heaps of garbage had been revealed after a decent melt on the dead end street. So, I decided to go home, only to return with several clear garbage bags, some gloves, and some music to listen to. I should have probably brought an industrial-strength hazmat suit, too.

From the bright orange A&W cups and Tim Hortons' iconic red beverage containers, to crushed beer cans and discarded chip bags, the place was an ugly sight. How is it that we throw so much garbage into snowbanks when there are literally six garbage bins within a Timmies-cup throw from the parking lot? I hauled away five full bags of garbage to the dump, and that was just scratching the surface.

And then there are the real stars of the season: the dog owners. I'm talking about the ones who let their dog do its business and say to themselves, "I'll come back for this later." Whelp! Later is here! Walking through parks and down the streets this time of year is like navigating a minefield of fecal contributions left behind from Fido and his lazy owner. And if you miscalculate a step or two on your walk, you'll be spending the rest of the afternoon dragging your shoes through the soggy grass or cleaning out the treads with a toothpick at home. Gross.

Spring is about rebirth and renewal, a fresh start. But, more importantly, it's about accountability. It's about being responsible for your winter laziness. It's about reflecting on how you were raised as a child and told to put things where they belong. I was told at a young age to always clean up after myself, put things away, and put them back where they belong. I was taught to always leave a clean campsite.

With the snow disappearing, the sun making weekly appearances, and our winter laziness exposed for all to see, it's time to make things right. Even for just 20 minutes. Let's get out there and clean up the mess that we pretended didn't exist for five months.

SEND IN YOUR PHOTO OF THE WEEK

editor@thehighlander.ca

Editorial opinion

LETTERS

Democracy denied

Dear editor,

Democracy is so vulnerable to being subjugated by new powers that Premier Doug Ford is introducing: loss of oversight from freedom of information already passed and now, the proposed changes giving the minister of municipal affairs and housing the power to appoint upper-tier council chairs in eight regions and giving them 'strong chair' powers.

Let's remember his forcing the closing of the science centre building, a $5 million unnecessary parking lot to support the 99-year lease he gave to an unproven tiny foreign company to build a luxury spa on Crown land and his overruling of the elected Toronto council with respect to the Billy Bishop Airport, and taking unilateral control of school boards...

Ford is going down the path of US President Donald Trump and Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban. He has effectively become an elected dictator.

Paul Zalan
Minden Hills

Over-governed

Dear editor,

Haliburton County is made up of four upper-tier governments consisting of: Algonquin Highlands, Highlands East, Dysart et al and Minden Hills. Population approximately 21,300 based on the 2025 Census.

It has on its staff: four mayors, four deputy mayors, 24 councillors, for a total of 32 governing a population of approximately 21,300.

Meanwhile, the City of Toronto, with a population of approximately 7.1 million is governed by one mayor and 44 councillors.

Just saying this looks a little like a gravy train.

Randy Linden
Haliburton County

Thanks, doc(k) day

Dear editor,

At the end of a never-ending winter which is slowly turning into a never-ending sea of mud, it was refreshing, uplifting and whatever other positive emotions may come to mind to be attending such a wonderful day of positivity watching four documentaries.

The morning started with a bang. *I am the Art: Nobuo Kubota* was a great trip following an artist and his impact on his audience and the impact felt by us the audience.

The two afternoon selections of docs were very interesting.

However, *The Art of Adventure* was an unforgettable experience. Watching two young men at age 27, 69 years ago in 1957-58, embark on an around-the-world safari of 80,000 km, was a deep emotional experience. It became a total experience when Foster Bristol, at 96 years of age, was able to join us for a Q&A for nearly an hour.

Every time the Those Other Movies committee decides to mount HIFF and Doc(k) Day and bring us the best of the best, they overwhelm us with movies to remember. 2025 HIFF was a great tour de force but this year's documentary fest topped them all.

Thank you to the committee for continuing to bring us such wonderful experiences.

Armin Weber
Eagle Lake

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Fred Pyziak said this barred owl dropped by and stuck around for about 20 minutes.

HUMANS OF HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

Just the way she likes it

By Susan Tromanhauser

Karen Wingrove's passion for the Highlands began when her family purchased a cottage on Head Lake near Norland in 1969. As a child, from the May 24 weekend to Thanksgiving, her family trekked to the cottage each weekend and spent two months there during school's summer break.

Wingrove remembers waiting with anticipation for her father to return from his General Motors job in Oshawa each Friday, to join the family for the weekend. Once her father returned with the car, the gang could go on their adventures to Kawartha Dairy, Robinsons General Store in Dorset or golf at Beaverbrook.

As a Girl Guide, Wingrove attended Camp Adelaide, unbeknownst to her, situated on property owned by her future husband's great-grandfather. While Wingrove was with her family on Head Lake, her husband-to-be's family enjoyed summers in the Kennisis/Redstone area; so, it was no surprise the couple purchased their own cottage. Six years ago, they made their Algonquin Highlands cottage their permanent home.

But Wingrove does not spend much time at their Beech Lake home near Carnarvon. Instead, her days are filled with happily volunteering with the Minden Legion and the Haliburton Red Wolves. At the Legion, she helps with the annual Remembrance Day poster and poetry contests and serves behind the bar three days a week. With the Red Wolves, an organization supporting athletes with developmental disabilities, she is the Haliburton County curling coordinator, using organizational skills honed during her 30-year teaching career. She still returns to Oshawa annually to assist with a student bonspiel she initiated more than 30 years ago. Wingrove also shares her talents and skills as an instrumental music teacher at White Pine Camp on Hurricane Lake, which offers activities in the performing arts, akin to *School of Rock*.

Wingrove's passion for the area has lured family and friends for frequent visits and she plans adventures to keep guests as busy as she is. Wingrove said, "there is always something to do in the Highlands no matter the season." Her family enjoys skating at the outdoor rink in Stanhope and floating down the Gull River in Minden. Her girls' weekends often include trips to the log chute or the Sculpture Forest in Haliburton. She lists radio bingo, euchre and line-dancing at Haliburton Highlands Brewing in Carnarvon as other favourite outings.

Wingrove "grew up with the cottage feeling" and is thrilled with her decision to retire to the Highlands. She enjoys the outdoors lifestyle saying living in the Highlands has "brought her blood pressure down." Through her community involvement she has met many people, who are now good friends; so many, she now finds trips to the landfill or the grocery store take much longer. To Wingrove, Minden and Haliburton are "friendly and quaint," less frantic than her life in Oshawa. She admits she is still very busy in the Highlands, but assures it is on her terms, just the way she likes it.

Karen Wingrove. *Submitted.*

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Highlander business

Chaulk acquires Huntsville business

By Lisa Gervais

Trevor Chaulk at the location on Hwy. 35 just south of Minden. *Submitted.*

Minden Hills-based Chaulk has announced it has acquired All About Kitchens in Huntsville.

Chaulk, named after owner Trevor Chaulk, does custom cabinetry for homes and businesses across Ontario from its location on Hwy. 35 south of Minden. They do everything from kitchens and bathrooms to home offices, garages and more.

They announced the acquisition of All About Kitchens April 1. It is a cabinetry and kitchen design company founded by Michael Smith, that has served homeowners and builders across Ontario for nearly 30 years.

The Highlands' company said it is a "strategic" take over "that marks a major growth milestone for Chaulk, strengthening its ability to serve a larger regional footprint and increasing its capacity to deliver custom cabinetry solutions across Ontario."

Chaulk has experienced significant growth over the past 17 years, expanding from a 600-square-foot home garage operation into a 5,000-square-foot cabinetry facility employing 12 full-time team members.

With the acquisition of All About Kitchens, Chaulk will expand its operations by an additional 15,000 square feet, in what the company says represents "a meaningful increase in market share and service capacity across the region."

They added that with a stronger presence across the Highlands, Muskoka and the Kawarthas, Chaulk and All About Kitchens now represent one of the largest cabinetry service footprints across Ontario, with a home base that includes the Haliburton Highlands and Muskoka, while continuing to serve major centres such as the Kawarthas, Ottawa and the Greater Toronto Area.

Chaulk, who is president of the company, said, "this is an exciting opportunity for Chaulk, and one that represents meaningful growth for our company.

"All About Kitchens has built an incredible reputation, and we're genuinely excited to work alongside another great team. We see this as a major step forward in expanding our reach, increasing capacity, and continuing to deliver the quality and service our clients and builder partners expect."

All About Kitchens founder, Smith, added, his company "has always been about craftsmanship, trust, and the people behind the work. I'm honoured to have Trevor Chaulk take on this legacy, and I'm confident he will lead the team forward with the same care, passion, and commitment to excellence."

Chaulk said it means "ongoing strategic focus on growth, operational efficiency, and product innovation. The company continues to invest in production capacity and systems that allow it to deliver industry-leading timelines without sacrificing quality. Chaulk said he will work closely with the All About Kitchens team to ensure a smooth transition, "maintaining the high standard of service clients have come to trust, while expanding the opportunities available through a larger combined operation."

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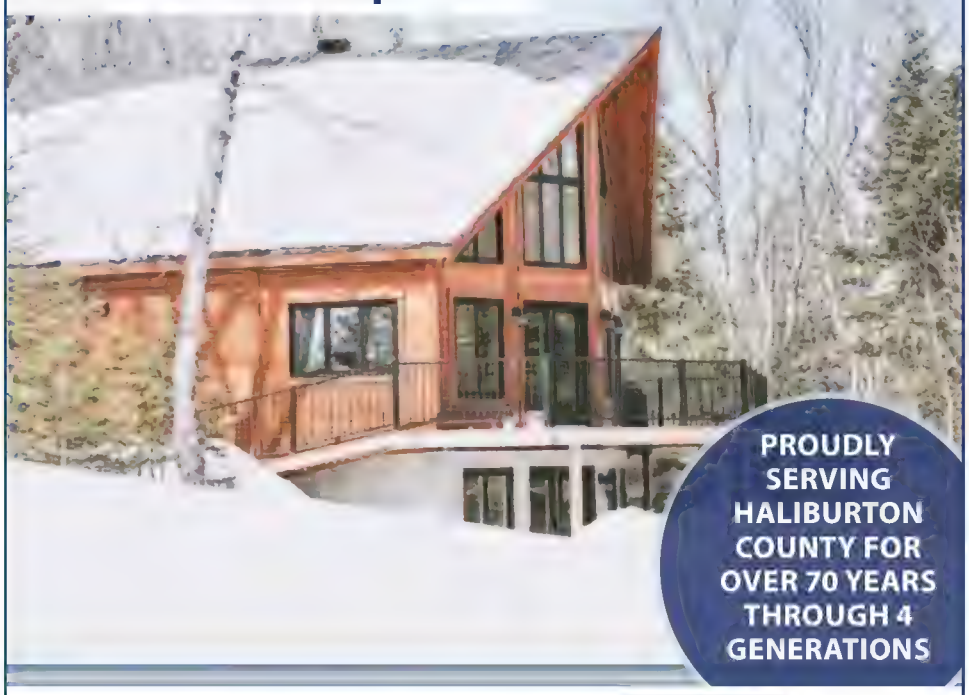

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Poquito Loco closing after summer

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Poquito Loco owner Claudette Pitre is pictured at her restaurant on April 14. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*

A community staple that has been a hub for fresh Mexican cuisine and community connection for the last six years, Poquito Loco, is set to close following the summer tourism season.

Owner Claudette Pitre confirmed to *The Highlander* that the restaurant will serve up its final tacos in September, closing its doors following Labour Day weekend.

Pitre said the decision was made after a long period of deliberation, and was driven by a combination of personal health challenges and the increasingly difficult economic reality of running a year-round food business in a seasonal town.

The Mexican restaurant began as a "passion project," created during the uncertainty of 2020, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We started mainly because my kids were in university and the school shut down, so I brought them back here because I didn't know what was going on," Pitre said. "My kids, as well as their friends, were not doing well with just sitting around, not having any social interaction or anything to do."

Even her mother teamed up to create something "magical.

"It was a project that we all did together," Pitre said. "I think that's what I'm most proud of, that we all created something from nothing together."

Paquito Loco first opened at the Silver Maple Motel on Highland Street. But, after two years, and rising rent costs, Pitre decided to look for a new home. That's when she found the "perfect" partnership within Castle Antiques & Cafe in the heart of downtown Haliburton.

"It's been a perfect fit," she said. "Being here and being in the sort of hub where all the action is. There are so many new things happening."

However, despite the success and community support, the reality of running a year-round business has become overwhelming. Pitre pointed to two major factors in the decision to close later this year: her health and the staggering rise in operating costs.

The business owner revealed that she suffers from trigeminal neuralgia, a chronic, often debilitating neuropathic pain disorder involving facial nerves. The condition causes intense shooting or jabbing pain that may feel like an electric shock. After undergoing one surgery two years ago, she is scheduled for another this May.

"It's a really intense, constant pain," Pitre admitted. "I've kind of stretched myself health-wise and financially. I probably should have closed a couple of years ago."

Economically, the owner explained that within the last five years her food costs have doubled, jumping from 30 per cent to 60 per cent of her overhead. To keep quality high, Pitre had travelled as far as Montreal for wholesale goods, but even those efforts have been squeezed by gas prices and inflation.

"Last week I paid $105 for a case of tomatoes," she said, noting they used to cost $30. "Lettuce now is like $5 a head. It's insane."

A 28-year resident of the County, Pitre said the restaurant allowed her to finally immerse herself in the community.

"Now, since I've had Poquito, I've gotten to know everybody. I finally feel like this is my home," she said.

It also became a venue for local music, a natural fit for Pitre's family. Both her children are musicians, her son a drummer, her daughter a singer-guitarist, and her husband, Mark Christiano of Ya Babys fame. Pitre herself dabbles in music and comes from a long line of performers.

While Poquito Loco is set to close in September, Pitre isn't quite ready to say goodbye and is laser-focused on a final successful season. She is currently hiring for the summer cottage rush and plans to host a last call celebration later this year.

"I'm sad that this is something I have to do, and I'm going to miss them all," Pitre said of her regulars. "They've made this part of my journey special."

Poquito Loco is open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday, until the end of the summer season.

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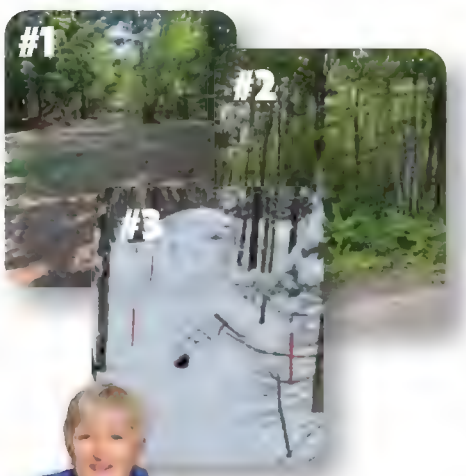

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L to R: Louise Ewing of 4C's, Laurie McCaig of SIRCH, Brandon Nimigon, Nicole Baxter of Central Food Network, and Barb Smith-Morrison of Brooksong. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Nimigons donate proceeds from sale

By Lisa Gervais

When Brandon Nimigon was contemplating what to do with remaining stock after the purchase of Bernstein's in downtown Haliburton, he reckoned a quick turnaround with proceeds going to charity was the way to go.

The sale generated $6,000 which has been split equally between: Brooksong Retreat and Cancer Support Centre, Central Food Network, 4Cs, SIRCH, Snowflake Meadows, and Minden Community Food Centre.

Nimigon said, "it just didn't make a lot of sense for us to spend months selling it. We thought we could instead do something good for the community, give to charities, and people who need it."

Representatives of some of the charities had a look at renovations of the building April 10. They were thankful of the support.

Nicole Baxter, a director for Central Food Network, said, "after a winter that continued to see calls for service break more records, we are grateful to Brandon for this support for us and other worthy charities. When local folks like Brandon step up like this, the impact is immediate and real for our neighbours throughout Haliburton County."

Laurie McCaig of SIRCH tipped her hat to the Nimigons for their "thoughtful and generous donation. It means a great deal to know you chose to support local non-profits in this way. The monetary gift will help support our Community Kitchen Program, where 1,750 meals are prepared each month and shared through 14 local partners. We also received a large donation of quality clothing and shoes, which will be made available through our Thrift Warehouse in Haliburton; helping extend that generosity even further within the community."

4Cs is the Haliburton Food Bank, and Lily Ann Thrift Store. They sell donated items to raise funds for food distribution. The food bank also accepts cash donations. Louise Ewing said, in addition to the money, Nimigon donated clothing and shoes to the Lily Ann, "which will be an immense help to our clients and customers."

Brooksong executive-director Barb Smith-Morrison also expressed gratitude saying, "this donation is so timely and will support the launch of our new local cancer support circle, co-created with local residents and Haliburton Highlands Health Services. This will be a facilitated, compassionate space where people can be with others who understand, share and listen, and experience gentle ways to support their wellbeing."

Renovation update

Nimigon said the renovations are going well, although the demolition is taking much longer than anticipated. They are going through a lot of removal bins. They have taken it back to the studs.

He said former museum employee Steve Hill spent some quality time in the attic. "We found a lot of cool stuff: an old building permit from 1973; and you can see how easy it was to get permits back in the day. They wrote down 'we're doing this, this, and this' and it was approved, that was it; old comic books and hockey cards from the 70s, wartime clothing from the early 1900s."

Nimigon thinks it will take a few months to get the work done.

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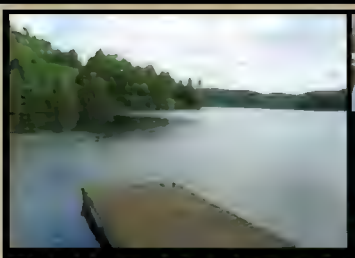

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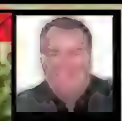

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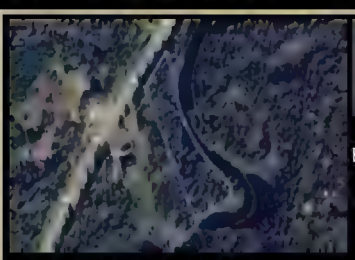

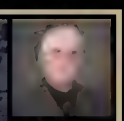

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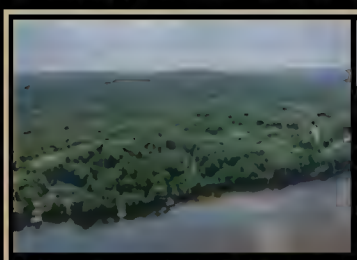

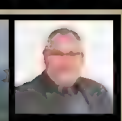

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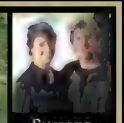
Haliburton Lake Lot $314,000
- Nearly 100ft of Sandy Shoreline
- Elevated Site with Lake Views
- Road Access + Hydro at Lot Line



Susanne James* & Andy Mosher** (705) 457-2128 ext. 133

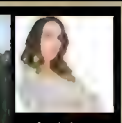
Miskwabi Lake – $1,199,000
- Spectacular Point Lot with 330' frontage
- 4 Season, 3 Br + Den. 2-Lake Chain
- Easy Year Round Access, Garage

Karyn Linton Marra* (705) 306-7515

Ready for the Spring Market?
- Thinking of selling this spring?
- Now is the time to get started!
- List now for a spring closing!

Kathy Martin* (705) 457-7592

Unicorn Road $1,300,000
- Custom Executive Bungalow on 4.5 Acres in the Coveted Gainforth Estates
- 2800+ SqFt. Attached 23x30 Garage



Ashley McKeigue* (705) 854-1833

Contau Lake Lot $379,000
- 1+ acre treed waterfront retreat
- Dock, deck, firepit, south views
- Driveway, hydro, year-round road

NEW PRICE

Brandon Nimigon*** (705) 457-8631

McKay Street $409,000
- 3 Beds / 1 Bath, 1000+ SqFt
- Full Unfinished Bsmt, Open Concept
- Walking Distance to Downtown Minden

Karen Nimigon** (705) 457-6505

Paradise Lake $599,000
- 3 Bed, 2 Bath 4-Season Retreat
- Wraparound Deck + Cozy Woodstove
- Dock & Waterfront Across Lane

NEW PRICE

Kelly Kay* (705) 457-6841 Kirsten Rae* (705) 854-1454

Haliburton Lake $1,499,900
- 3 Bed, 2.5 Bath W/Wall-To-Wall Views
- Beach Entry + Dock For Deep Water
- Garage, Studio & Standby Generator

Darlene Reil* (705) 854-2055

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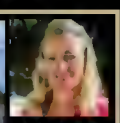
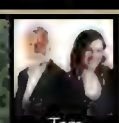
Christine Sharp* (416) 566-1592

Contau Lake $1,425,000
- 3 Beds/2 Baths, 3,300+SqFt, Post & Beam
- Zoned Heating & Cooling, Lg Heated Shop
- Dtch'd 26'x40' Garage, Oversized Dock



Melanie Vigrass* (705) 754-5494

Minden Condo $434,900
- 1 Bdrm+1 Den, 1.5 Baths, In Suite Laundry
- 2 Walkouts to Large Balcony
- Quartz Counters, Underground Parking



Tom Wilkinson** (705) 457-6839 Lindsay Wilkinson* (705) 854-1454

Gull River $924,900
- A home with something for everyone
- Energuide efficiency rating 83
- Access to 3 lakes

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Highlander events

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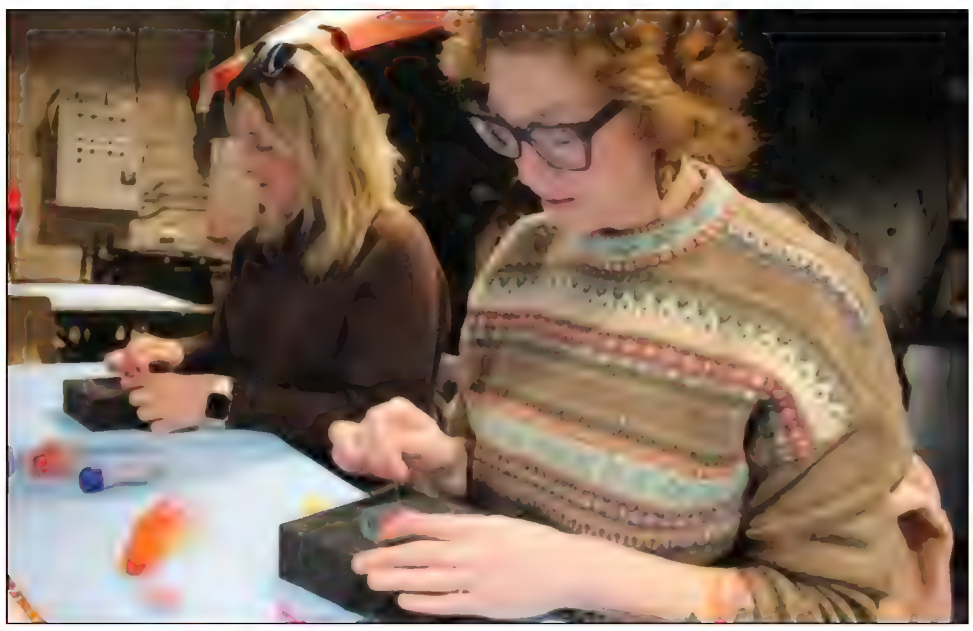
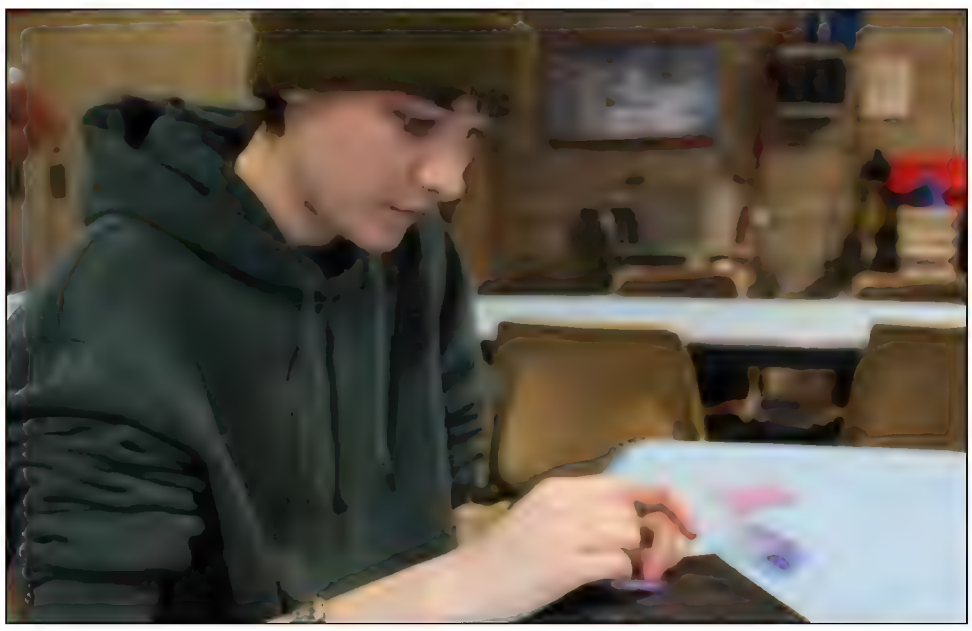
- Rolling & Forming
- Custom Welding
- Engineering
- Drafting
- House Beam Supply & Delivery





Have a look

The Haliburton School of Art + Design (HSAD) hosted an open house April 11. Visitor toured classrooms, studio spaces, and the new on-campus residence. A hands-on fabric brooch workshop was featured. The annual event is a chance to meet instructors, view student projects, and learn about the 2026 course offerings, including ceramics, glasswork, and painting. The college will showcase its 'We Made It' exhibition April 18 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. *(Lisa Gervais)*

Top: Sandra Morrison and Michelle Roche take part in a fabric brooch workshop. Bottom: Theo Morrison does some felting in one of the studios. *Photos by Lisa Gervais*

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Highlander events

Whodunnit

The Art of Deception Dinner Theatre: A Masterpiece of Bad Decisions was staged at the Wilberforce Legion April 11 and 12. Mary Barker wrote the play on behalf of the Loop Troupe. Proceeds are going towards the Legion kitchen. *(Lisa Gervais)*

Top: Some of the cast members: Linda Ladd, Rick Cleveland, Jodi Rupnow, Angie Waugh, Gary Mount, Sheila Barnes, Nataly Mylan and Nancy Duff. Bottom left: Gil Boyer in scuba gear. Bottom right: Waugh and Mylan (in glasses). *Submitted.*

1099 Summer Lane $1,175,000

1021 Fifth Lane $264,900

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Highlander events

The Municipality of Highlands East is accepting Tenders for

Lloyd Watson Memorial Centre Roof Repair and/or Replacement on North and South Side

RFT-02-2026

Work to be completed as follows and the pricing will be in accordance with the items below:

1. Repair/install a flat roof on the north side measuring 1,540 ft2.
2. Repair/install a flat roof on the south side measuring 1,150 ft2.
3. Thermoplastic polyolefin material to be used for the flat roof.
4. Properly seal all roof penetrations to prevent future leaks.
5. Work to start mid-May 2026 and be completed by June 12, 2026.

Sealed tenders are to be clearly marked **"RFT-02-2026 Lloyd Watson Memorial Centre Roof Repair"** and submitted to the attention of the contact provided below:

Brittany McCaw, CAO/Treasurer Municipality of Highlands East
2249 Loop Road, Box 295
Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0

Deadline for RFT Submissions: Wednesday, May 6th 2026, at 1:00 P.M
For further details and to download a copy of the Request for Tender document, please visit the municipal website at www.highlandseast.ca

For additional information and to view installation site, please contact:
Jim Alden, Property Supervisor at 705-455-7515 or jalden@highlandseast.ca
Keith Tallman Memorial Arena
2256 Loop Road, Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0

The Municipality of Highlands East is accepting Tenders for Two ,7.5-Ton Mechanical Dehumidifiers

RFT-01-2026

Two, 7.5 Ton Mechanical Dehumidifiers

The dehumidifiers are to be installed, wired, and fully operational by June 19, 2026, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the Municipality and Contractor. The existing dehumidifiers are to be removed and decommissioned, including freon, and taken off site.

Sealed tenders are to be clearly marked **"RFT-01-2026 – Two, 7.5 Ton Mechanical Dehumidifiers"** and submitted to the attention of the contact provided below:

Brittany McCaw, CAO/Treasurer Municipality of Highlands East
2249 Loop Road, Box 295
Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0

Deadline for RFT Submissions: Tuesday, May 5th 2026, at 1:00 P.M

For further details and to download a copy of the Request for Proposal document, please visit the municipal website at www.highlandseast.ca

For additional information and to view installation site, please contact:

Jim Alden, Property Supervisor at 705-455-7515 or jalden@highlandseast.ca
Keith Tallman Memorial Arena
2256 Loop Road, Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0

Inspiration on the doc(k)

On April 11, at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion, Those Other Movies (TOM) brought four documentary films (three full-length and one shorter film) to Haliburton. It was an opportunity to come together as a community to learn, reflect, and be inspired. TOM was excited this year to present an all-Canadian line up with films that touched upon the immigrant experience, the natural world, artistic pursuits, community contributions, dementia care, entrepreneurship and adventure. *(Lisa Gervais)*

Top: The Doc(k) Day crew pose on the red carpet before the opening of the documentary film festival in Haliburton April 11. *Submitted.* Middle: The Lions were on hand to provide food and beverages. Left to right: Marilyn Frost, Ann McIvor, Pat and Ray Howlett. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.* Bottom: *The Art of Adventure's* Bristol Foster and director Alison Reid during a question-and-answer session. *Submitted.*

Highlander events

Flipping for community

The Haliburton United Church hosted its second-annual pancake supper April 11, where community members were treated to a free meal. Fresh hot stacks with maple syrup and sausages were being served while community members socialized from 4.30-6.30 p.m.

Top: Jennifer Alley flips a flapjack as community members gather for a free pancake supper. Middle: Organizer Georgia Shank and volunteer member Thelma Chudy serve up some sausages. “We really wanted to bring the community together and give back and provide a hearty meal and good conversation,” Shank said. Bottom: Family and friends enjoy some hotstacks and sausages at the United Church. *Photos by Adam Frisk*

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills has received applications to consider by-laws to stop up, close, and convey those parcels of land, being shoreline road allowances, more particularly described as follows:

1. **File No. PLSRA2024054:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Davis Lake, lying in front of 1003 Lilypad Lane located within Lot 10, Concession 2, Geographic Township of Lutterworth

2. **File No. PLSRA2025077:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Twelve Mile Lake, lying in front of 2060 Twelve Mile Lake Road located within Lot 10, Concession 12, Geographic Township of Minden

3. **File No. PLSRA2025078:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Twelve Mile Lake, lying in front of Property Roll #4616-032-000-77000 within Lot 10, Concession 12, Geographic Township of Minden

4. **File No. PLSRA2025089:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Kashagawigamog Lake, lying in front of 1200 Sugar Bush Lane located within Lot 21, Concession 4, Geographic Township of Minden

5. **File No. PLSRA2025090:** Part of the original shore road allowance along the shore of Kashagawigamog Lake, lying in front of 1232 Sugar Bush Lane located within the Lot 21, Concession 4, Geographic Township of Minden

The above noted applications are available for inspection in the Planning Department located at 7 Milne Street, Minden, Ontario by appointment only. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the undersigned or by visiting www.mindenhills.ca/newsroom.

AND TAKE NOTICE should you wish to provide comments with respect to the above referenced applications, please submit in writing those comments to the undersigned not later than end of day on **May 15, 2026**.

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE any person who claims that their land will be prejudicially affected is asked to contact the undersigned not later than May 15, 2026.

AND TAKE FURTHER NOTICE if deemed advisable, By-laws giving effect to the proposed closures and conveyances will be passed by the Council for the Corporation of the Township of Minden Hills. Please note that a Council meeting to consider By-laws for the above referenced applications will be scheduled at a later date following the requiste commenting period.

Donna Sisson
Clerical Assistant, Building, By-Law and Planning
705-286-1260 Ext. 509
dsisson@mindenhills.ca

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A participant in a past challenge. *Submitted.*

Time to jump in a lake

Residents in the Coboconk area are preparing for a May 2 cold plunge in local lakes to support the soon-to-be-opened Summit Wellness Centre.

Opening later this summer, the SWC will be a hub for community health and space for the underserved northern areas of Kawartha Lakes.

SWC operations director Jennifer Wilson said the Jump in the Lake Challenge is a fun way for the community to participate in raising funds for much-needed equipment and furniture for the centre.

"The Summit Wellness Centre is being built by the community, for the community - every inch of it has been designed to address the needs expressed by hundreds of people who live here. We can't wait for the day later this summer when we can all celebrate its opening together."

Wilson added the challenge has a long history of supporting causes in communities that will have a big, positive impact. Since its inception in 2020, over 100 participants and thousands of generous donors have raised more than $200,000 for the Coby community. This year's goal is $20,000.

Unlike organized Polar Bear dips that happen in one central location, this takes place off each participant's dock or waterfront location of their choice.

People can join the challenge as a participant or donor at kawarthalakeside.com

"The Jump in the Lake Challenge embodies our strong community spirit. Year after year, we are absolutely thrilled with how such a small action by a number of people has the ability to transform and inspire a small community," local realtor and organizer Dean Michel said. (Lisa Gervais)

A big reveal at Brooksong

The cast and crew of the latest production from Highlands Little Theatre, *Calendar Girls*, announced that the sale of their specially-produced calendars during the run of the show netted $2,500 for Brooksong Retreat and Cancer Support Centre. Following a tour of the facility and an explanation of the programming offered at the retreat centre, on April 12, members of the *Calendar Girls* team made the presentation to executive director Barb Smith-Morrison. Among those on hand were, from the left, Jack Brezina, Karen Frybort, Rita Jackson, Amy Brohm, Elyse Boisvert, Smith-Morrison holding one of the calendars, Kate Hall, David Zilstra, Kate Butler, Cathy McIlmurray, Norma Bingham and John Jackson. Copies of the calendars are still available from Brooksong. Minimum donation $25. *Photo by Maryssa Danilko.*

Home of the Highland Storm

U13 Rep Curry Chevrolet

What an incredible season for our U13 Rep Curry Chevrolet team.

From the first skate in September to the final buzzer, this group showed dedication, teamwork, and heart every step of the way. The players worked hard, supported one another, and grew tremendously both on and off the ice.

There were big wins, tough battles, and plenty of unforgettable moments along the way—including winning both the Regional and International Silver Stick tournaments.

Most importantly, this team showed what it truly means to compete with effort, respect, and pride every time they stepped on the ice.

After a hard-fought run, the team came up short in the semifinal against Brock Wild, but not without playing some very close and competitive games.

A huge thank you to our coaches for their commitment and leadership, and to our parents and families for their constant support throughout the season. And of course, congratulations to our players for giving it their all and representing the team so well.

Great season, great team, and great memories. Proud of this group. *(Submitted)*

U13 LL Casey's Water Well & Geothermal

What an incredible season for the U13 LL Casey's Water Well & Geothermal Team. From start to finish, this team showed heart, grit, and determination. We were right there all year. So many close games, five ties, and semifinals decided by goal difference. Every player gave everything, and that's something to be proud of.

Even if we came up just short in the standings and tournaments, this group never stopped competing. The effort, growth, and heart shown all season long made this team something special. Every battle, every close game, every near miss, it all showed the kind of team we are: resilient, united, and ready for whatever comes next.

Aliyah – As captain, Aliyah led by example. Her leadership, team-first mentality, and consistency made her the heart of the squad.

Kylie – Always a steady presence on any line, Kylie's puck-battling skills and support play made her a difference-maker.

Raelyn – Lightning-fast and fearless in front of the net, Ray's speed and tenacity caused problems for defenders all year. She never backed down, no matter how big the opponent.

Parker – The ultimate Swiss Army knife. From defence to forward, power play to penalty kill, Parker excelled everywhere and embodied "whatever the team needs."

Miller – Combining speed and relentless hustle, Miller's "never quit" attitude set the tone and pushed teammates to give their best every game.

Jase – Skill and creativity defined Jase's game. His ability to turn dead plays into scoring chances was remarkable, and while intense on the ice, he remained the calm, steady presence off it.

Grayson – A clutch scorer and elite playmaker, Grayson showed incredible ice vision and always put the team first, shining brightest in big moments.

Mason – In his first year, Mason improved tremendously and even found the back of the net a couple of times. Proof of his growing confidence and effort.

Jack – Another first-year player who worked hard to learn and grow, Jack netted a few goals of his own and shows great promise for the future.

Charlie – A true team-first player. Always looking to set up his teammates, Charlie notched a huge assist in the playoffs and played with great awareness all season.

Nolan – Found his role as a strong power forward with a heavy shot that became a valuable weapon in the team's offense.

Olivia – A leader on the blue line with tremendous hockey sense, Olivia's vision and defensive skill anchored the team's back end all season.

Beau – Brought excitement to the game with his offensive rushes from the defence. His scoring touch and speed always added a spark.

Bobby – Always smiling, always positive. Bobby's sportsmanship and fun-loving attitude made him an amazing teammate and vital part of the team spirit.

Blair – Made huge strides this season, earning opportunities on special teams and becoming a trusted player in key moments.

Nathan – A reliable, stay-at-home defenceman, Nathan's calm presence and great penalty-killing skills made him a defensive rock.

Brody – Took big steps forward throughout the year, competing hard in front of his own net and showing great development in his defensive play.

Gavin – The backbone of the team. A strong, confident goalie who commanded his crease and led with communication and poise. His attitude inspired everyone to play their hardest. *(Submitted)*

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What's on

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Office open 9 a.m. to noon, clubroom closed. Bridge at 1 p.m., youth dart league (ages 10-18) 6:20 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Tuesdays: Cadets after school starts at 5 p.m., meeting starts at 6 p.m. Games and cards night starting at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Darts league 7 p.m. start.
Wednesdays: Bid euchre 1 p.m. start, Remembrance Hall. Bingo will resume in the spring.
Thursdays: General meeting third Thursday of the month, March to December; ladies auxiliary meeting last Thursday of the month, February to November.
Fridays: Meat draw, five draws, five prize each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m., tickets are $2 per draw; fun darts at 4:30 p.m. onwards; 50/50 draw at 5 p.m., tickets are $1 and available in the clubroom.
Saturdays: Open only for special events Clubroom hours: Monday 3-6 p.m., Tues 5-9 p.m., Wed/Thurs 3-6 p.m., Fri 3-7 p.m., Saturday/Sunday closed.

Royal Canadian Legion - Mabel D. Brannigan Branch 636 Minden

Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Monday to Thursday** with regular menu and daily special including Liver Lovers' **Tuesday**.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner 4-7 p.m.
Saturday all day breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541
Weekly activities:
Karaoke: call for dates
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week.
Monday: Euchre 1-3 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1-3 p.m., Darts 7-9 p.m. and euchre 7-9 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 624 Wilberforce

Monday: open 7 to 10 p.m. Darts April 15, 22 and 29 at 7 p.m.
Tuesday: closed, special events only. Exercise club April 14, 21 and 28 at 1 p.m.
Wednesday: open 2 to 10 p.m. Darts April 15, 22 and 29 at 2 p.m.; cribbage at 6:30 p.m.; April 15, 22 and 29 quick supper from 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Thursday: open 2 to 10 p.m. HHHS social rec April 9 and 23 at 10 a.m.
Friday: open 2 to 11 p.m. Fish and chips April 17 from 5 to 8 p.m. April 10 and 24 is community care lunch at noon and wings and jam session from 5 to 8 p.m.
Saturday: open 2 to 9 p.m. Karaoke April 18 from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. and trivia April 25 at 7 p.m.
Sunday: closed, special events only. Ladies auxiliary breakfast April 12 from 9 to 11 a.m.

Royal Canadian Legion – Branch 566 Cardiff

Hours: Sunday and Monday 3 to 6 p.m. and **Thursday** 3 to 9 p.m.
Events: Breakfast on the first **Sunday** of each month from 9 to 11 a.m.; euchre on the **second Sunday** of each month at 12:30 p.m.
Shuffleboard every **Thursday** from 7 to 9 p.m.
Music and jam session ever second **Saturday** of the month from 1 to 4 p.m. Everyone welcome.

EVENTS

April 17, 6:30 p.m. Point in Time Centre for Children, Youth and Parents is hosting a fundraising dance at Highland Hills United Church in Minden. Music provided by Adverse Conditions. Refreshments available be donation during admission. Tickets are $25 in advance and $30 at the door. Available online at Eventbrite.ca, at 69 Eastern Ave. in Haliburton during office hours, or by calling 705-286-1470.

April 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Stop by the Haliburton School of Art + Design to see what students and alumni have been creating lately at the college's 'We Made It' end-of-term exhibit.

April 19, 2-5 p.m. Haliburton Legion Club Room. Euchre for a cause. $10 per person, tables and singles welcome. All proceeds to the Haliburton food bank. Cash bar open and complimentary snacks.

April 21, 7-8:30- p.m. Stanhope Fire Fighters Community Hall, Algonquin Highlands. The final 'voices and votes' session, Understanding campaigns: how success happens will feature Lauren Hunter, a seasoned campaign strategist of more than 20 municipal, provincial, and federal campaigns, sharing the building blocks of a successful campaign, whether that's for elected office or for a cause people care about, along with practical tips and tools.

April 23, 7-9 p.m. award nominated Canadian songwriter Zachary Lucky is doing a Home Routes/Haliburton County Folk Society concert at Knox United Church, 1012 Harvey Ave., Dorset. To reserve your seat email: mandjbuss@gmail.com or phone: 705-380-0895. $25 cash at the door. Proceeds to the artist.

April 24, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Open door at SIRCH Bistro and Bakery. Feeling disconnected? New to the community? Carrying a lot? Come out to this new monthly drop-in for free coffee, conversation and connection. No presentations or expectations. Taking place on the last Friday of every month.

April 26, 2 p.m. Wild Honey Hoedown at the Haliburton Legion. This annual springtime fundraiser for the Johnny Burke Foundation features country acts Stephen Francis, Jamie Oliver, Christine Vaillancourt and Scott McGregor. Tickets are $25 and available at ticketscene.ca or by calling Teresa (705-455-7252) or the legion (705-457-2571).

April 27, 1 p.m. The Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library (HCPL) are hosting Fay Martin, author of *Dementia Widow*, to hear firsthand about her experience caregiving for her husband throughout his dementia journey. Taking place at the Minden Hills branch. Admission is by donation.

April 28, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Environment Haliburton! is hosting Gord Jones, a retired HVAC technician, at the Haliburton Highlands Museum for a discussion on green home heating solutions. RSVP to environmenthaliburton705@gmail.com. Refreshments will be served.

May 12, 7 p.m. Your garden is buzzing. Please join the Minden & District Horticultural Society at the Minden Community Centre, 55 Parkside St., Minden. Learn about "The Bee Project – Native Bees" from guest speaker Cheryl Fraser, followed by the monthly society meeting. New members welcome.

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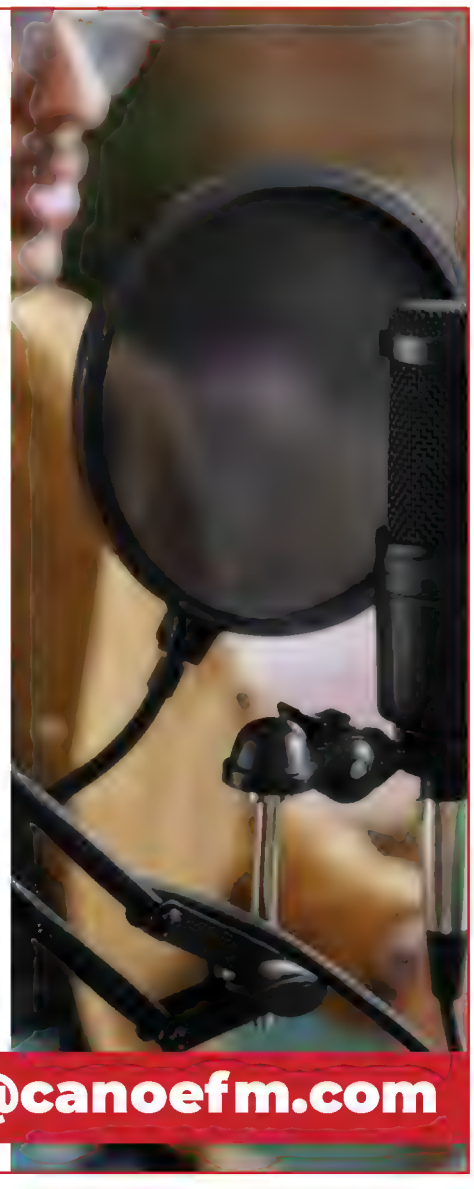

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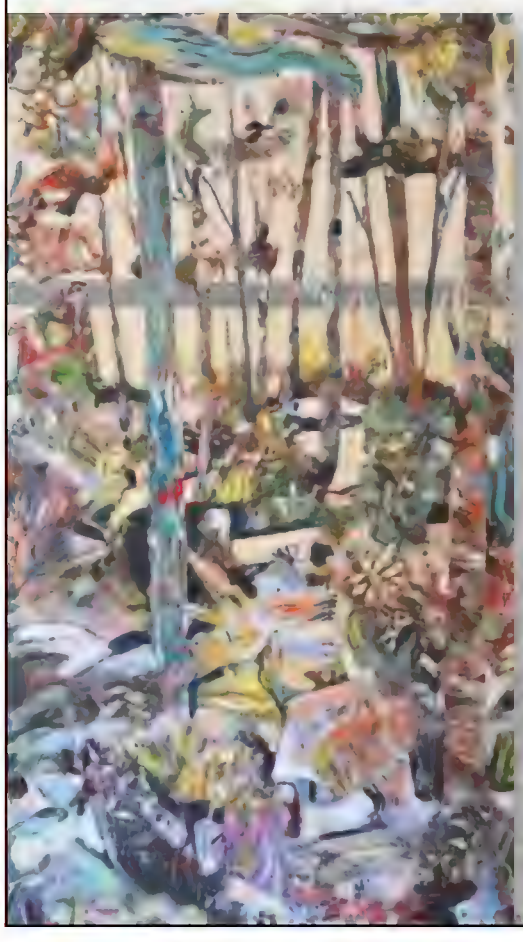

Chance to have say in fall cultural fest

By Lisa Gervais

Haliburton County has been designated as an official Ontario Culture Days provincial hub, and the Arts Council Haliburton Highlands wants the community to be involved in the planning.

Sharon Kennedy, board vice-chair, said Culture Days is a nationwide celebration of arts and culture, inviting the public to get hands-on and behind-the-scenes to highlight the importance of arts and culture in communities.

The celebrations run from Sept. 18 – Oct. 4.

"It's all about building connections, showcasing creativity, and making the arts accessible for everyone," Kennedy said.

She added the Haliburton Culture Days hub will bring together a collection of local events that celebrate creativity, community, and cultural expression. They will be free, or pay-what-you-may. While each activity stands on its own, the hub will serve as a simple way to connect events and highlight the shared spirit of discovery and participation.

To get involved, local artists, creators, community groups, and arts and cultural organizations are invited to take part. Everyone is encouraged to join in the celebration and list free activities, events, and programs on the website (culturedays.ca), beginning mid-May.

Kennedy said all it takes is the offer of one free, or pay-what-you-may, activity, and audience participation.

Arts Council Haliburton Highlands is hosting two online information sessions. Attendance is open and no rsvp is required. Visit haliburtonarts.on.ca for the online link to the sessions: April 20, 7-8 p.m. or April 24, 1-2 p.m. If you are unable to attend either session, the recording will be available on the Arts Council website.

An artist gets hands-on with their work. *Submitted.*

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COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

- April 16 – Special Council Meeting
- April 30 – Special Council Meeting
- May 14 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Confirm you are on the Voters List! The next municipal election will be held on Monday, October 26, 2026. To register and/or confirm your information visit the Elections Ontario Register Voter Portal www.registertovoteon.ca/

Need assistance? Visit election staff at the Administration building (7 Milne St.) Monday-Friday during regular business hours.

CEMETERY CLEAN-UP

Cemetery clean-up will be taking place from April 18 - April 30, 2026.

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

Mute Eloquence of Light: Arctic Works by Janet Read will be on display in the Agnes Jamieson Gallery until May 23. The exhibit features abstract paintings on linen, oil and acrylic works on panel, and mixed drawing–painting pieces on Duralar, inspired by the artist's experiences in the Canadian Arctic and along Greenland's west coast. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm. Admission is by donation. For more exhibit information: https://calendar.mindenhills.ca/default/Detail/2026-04-14-1000-Exhibit-Mute-Eloquence-of-Light-Arctic-Works-by-Ja

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

EARTH DAY CLEAN UP

Join us on April 22 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. for a community litter cleanup along our beautiful riverwalk and downtown core. Be part of the effort to keep our community litter-free while celebrating Earth Day.

To participate in this great initiative, please register by scanning the QR code.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Take Notice there will be two Special Meetings of Council held on the following dates:

- Thursday April 16, 2026
- Thursday April 30, 2026.

Both meetings will commence at 9:00 AM in the Council Chambers, located at 7 Milne Street, Minden, ON. The purpose of the Special meetings is to review and consider Departmental Reports as the Regular scheduled Council meetings of April 9th and April 23rd were cancelled.

The Special Council meetings will be conducted with a Hybrid model of in-person or electronic participation. Please visit our website for more information.

Dated this 10th day of April 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Vicki Bull, Clerk
(705) 286-1260 Ext 515
vbull@mindenhills.ca

7 Milne Street, PO Box 359, Minden, ON, K0M 2K0 | Phone: 705-286-1260 • Toll Free 1-844-277-1260 • Fax: 705-286-4917

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WANTED

WANTED – Looking for someone to deliver Bolaris Tractor from Gelert to home on Ben Road, ALSO looking for T-Bars for fencing. Contact 705-286-3823 or samuriron@hotmail.com

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HALIBURTON MAN looking for work, Mason by trade, but familiar with all aspects of construction, reno's, demo, bush work, etc. Also, Chimney or Fireplace repair, Foundation repair, brick, block, stone, concrete & tile. Call Shannon at 306-317-7073

NOTICE

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS - Sundays - 10:30 am at St. Anthony's, 27 Victoria Street Haliburton. Wednesdays - 7:00 PM at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle St. in Minden - rear door. Thinking about alcohol. Thinking about stopping. We've been there. We can help!

HELP WANTED

Municipality of Highlands East — Yours to Explore — highlandseast.ca

The Municipality of Highlands East
is currently seeking candidates for the future position of:

Part-Time, Trails Coordinator
Property/Parks & Recreation Department

Current Rate of Pay per CUPE Local 4416 Collective Agreement:
$32.33/hour

Up to 30 Hours per week, varied days of the week
Overtime, weekend and evening work may be required.
Position to commence as soon as possible.

Reporting to the Property Supervisor, the successful candidate will lead the continued development and implementation of the Municipality's multi-use trail system. Building on foundational work, including the municipal Trails Strategy Initiative report, the Trails Coordinator will take a staged approach to expand and enhance trail infrastructure, access, and programming. This role requires strong collaboration with municipal departments, community stakeholders, and approval authorities to secure access across Crown, municipal, county, and private lands.

To apply you must possess:

- A Post-Secondary Diploma in Environmental Studies, Recreation Management Urban Planning, or a related field
- Minimum two (2) years experience in trail development, parks planning, or community project coordination
- Valid Ontario Class "G" Driver's License

A copy of the detailed job posting, and description are available upon request or on the Highlands East website at www.highlandseast.ca

If you are interested in joining our dedicated team of municipal professionals, applications **clearly marked "Application – Part-Time, Trails Coordinator "** may be submitted on or before 12:00 p.m, Tuesday, May 5th, 2026 via email, mail, in person, or fax. Interested applicants may submit their resume, including references, in confidence to:

Tracy Vader, HR/Payroll Coordinator
Municipality of Highlands East
P.O. Box 295, 2249 Loop Road
Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0
E-Mail: humanresources@highlandseast.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The Municipality of Highlands East is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants requiring accommodation are asked to contact the HR/Payroll Coordinator.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered will be used solely for candidate selection purposes only. Questions about this collection should be directed to Tracy Vader, HR/Payroll Coordinator.

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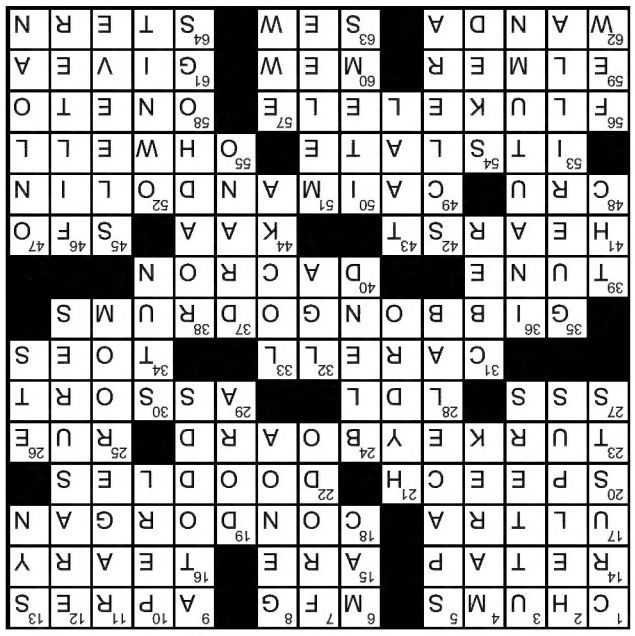
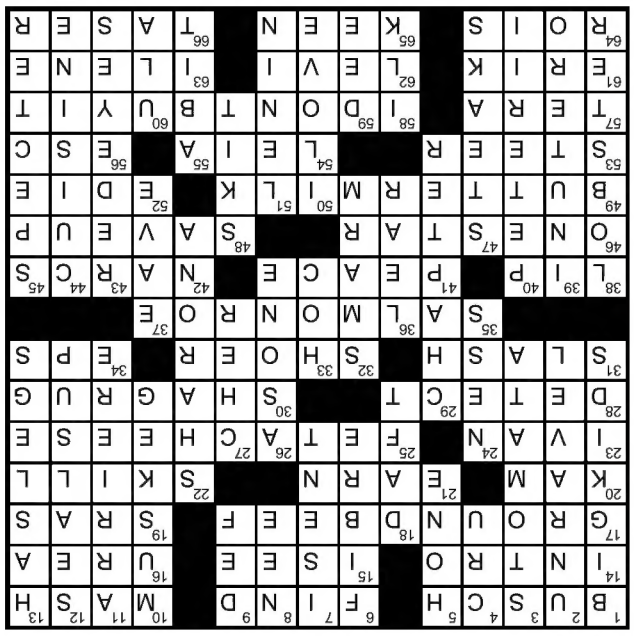
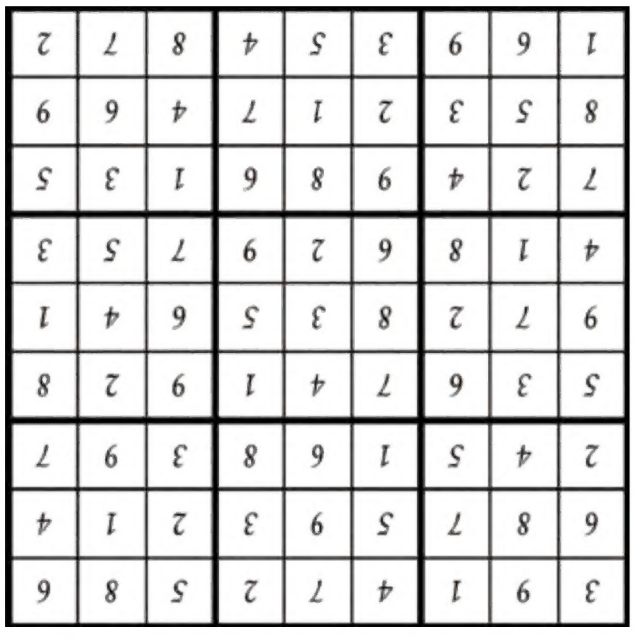


THIS WEEK'S SOLUTIONS





OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Ted Burbidge

Resident of Algonquin Highlands

It is with deep love and fond remembrance that the family of Ted Burbidge announces his peaceful passing, surrounded by family, on April 7, 2026, at the age of 85.

Ted was born on May 16, 1940, in Guelph, Ontario, to Norman Alfred and Elsie Jane (Creamer). He was the middle of three children and is survived by his sister Marilyn and brother Peter (Ann). Ted graduated from the Hamilton Institute of Technology as a textile technologist and went on to have a successful career in sales and business.

Ted started coming to Halls Lake as a young boy, beginning a connection that would span 80 years. He enjoyed working with his hands and, in 1972, started to build his own cottage. It was a lifelong labour of love, and, eventually, the family cottage became their permanent home, a true reflection of his dedication, craftsmanship, and love for Halls Lake.

Ted had a great sense of humour and lived a life full of love and adventure, and enjoyed spending time with family and friends from all over the world. Whether it was a building project at the cottage, water, or winter skiing, fishing, curling, dancing, golfing, doing community volunteer work, or hanging around the pond with the beavers, he found joy in life's everyday moments.

Ted will be forever in the hearts of his wife of 61 years, Elaine, and his children James (Jenny) and Jennifer (David). He will be lovingly remembered by his grandchildren, Kaitlyn (Sal), Melissa, Zachary, Ben, Holly, and great-grandchildren Matthew and Alessio. Ted will be dearly missed and in the hearts of all who knew him.

Memorial Service

Friends and family are invited to attend at the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME**, 13523 HWY #118, Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0 (705) 457-9209 on Saturday, April 18th, 2026 at 1:00 for a Memorial Service in Ted's honour. As an expression of sympathy, donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation would be greatly appreciated by Ted's family.

Community Funeral Home

In Loving Memory of

Art Theberge

Art died peacefully at the Haliburton Hospital on April 8. He is now at the "Honey Hole" fishing and enjoying the sounds of the outdoors - his vision of Heaven.

Art will be deeply missed by his partner and best friend, Liz Bloomfield, his stepson, David Bloomfield (Kimberly Lindsay), his grandsons, Daxton and Denver, his grandnieces, Adiya and Keetyn, his siblings and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents Marcel and Juliette Theberge, his sister, Rosanne Maitland and his stepdaughter, Sarah Bloomfield.

Art was a unique man and a deep thinker. He was loving, considerate and loyal to his friends and family. Art had a wry wit that he displayed quietly with a smirk and a twinkle. Art enjoyed an evening of playing cards but only if he won.

Art had a deep love and passion for music. His lengthy and varied career in the music industry spanned many decades. He managed several bands like DownChild Blues Band which proudly led to Art being awarded a Juno in 2014 and Maple Blues Award in 2019.

In lieu of flowers, if you choose, donations can be made to Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Cystic Fibrosis Canada or Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Association.

IN MEMORIUM

In Loving Memory

Barb Morrison

September 7, 1963 to April 15, 2018

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AL ANON- WE CARE, are you troubled by someone's drinking? Meetings: Thursdays 7 p.m., St. Anthony's 27 Victoria Street, Haliburton, and Mondays 7 p.m. at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle, Rear Entrance, Minden. 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) al-anon.org All are welcome.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS Admission is free and the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. This meeting is for addicts only. New meeting in Haliburton that meets every Thursday from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at 83 Maple Ave. Unit 7A in Haliburton Halco Plaza, behind Castle Antiques. For more information and an online version visit www.cloana.org or call 1-888-811-3887

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2026 HANDBOOK

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Highlander puzzles

Do Not Eat

by Barbara Olson
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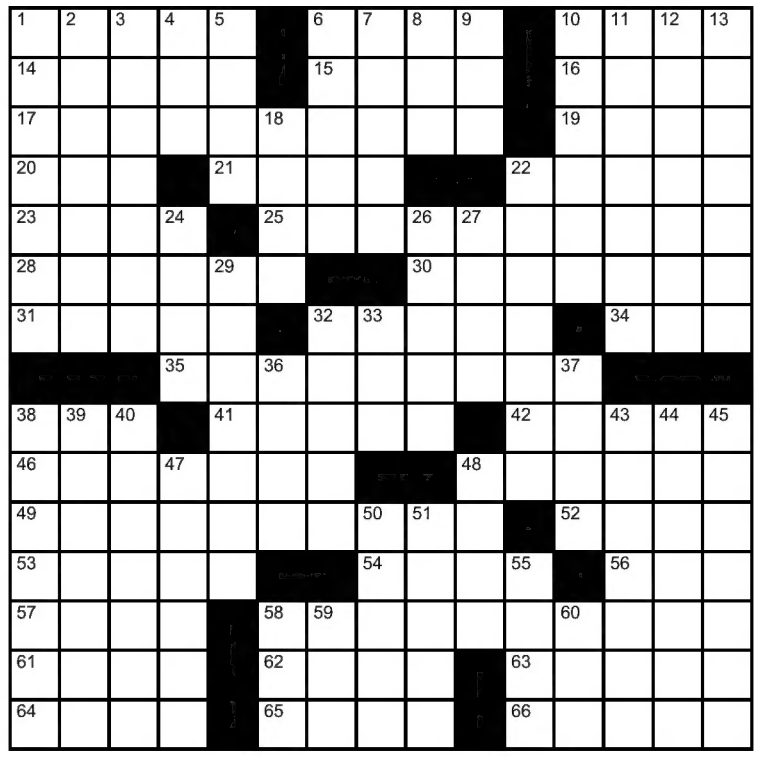

Across

1 Anheuser-___ Brewery
6 Locate
10 Prepare potatoes for shepherd's pie
14 Leadup to the lyrics
15 Nodder's words, maybe
16 Fertilizer compound
17 Ingredient in hamburger patties
19 Spanish Mmes.
20 ___ Fong of "Hawaii Five-O"
21 Deserve
22 Résumé listing
23 Canadian comedian Decker
25 Ingredient in Greek salad
28 Pick up on
30 Popular '70s floor covering
31 URL part
32 Blacksmith, at times
34 Brief albums, in brief
35 Ingredient in sushi
38 Gloss target
41 Diplomacy goal
42 Traffic cops?
46 Film flop rating
48 Keep in a piggy bank
49 Ingredient in fluffy pancakes
52 Singer Brickell, wife of Paul Simon
53 ___ clear of (avoid)
54 Sci-fi girl with side rolls
56 "Out" key
57 "Trillion" starter for byte
58 Words from a disbeliever, or from a vegan grocery shopper regarding 17-, 25-, 35- and 49-Across
61 "The Red" explorer
62 First name in jeans
63 "Ryan's Hope" actress ___ Kristen
64 Former Versailles residents
65 "Neato!"
66 Weapon that'll stop you alive?

Down

1 Teens, to tots
2 Slowly solve, as a mystery
3 Leaf openings
4 Fine vineyard word
5 Use a whetstone
6 Tiny piece of forensic evidence
7 "Tell them ___ you"
8 Maiden name word
9 Metal's ___ Leppard
10 Marshland of Canada's north
11 À l'___ ("in the back" in French)
12 Closes tight, as a canning lid
13 Just might succeed, in slang
18 Utterly batty
22 The Knack's "My ___"
24 Common noun ending
26 "... and the world will live ___" ("Imagine" lyric)
27 French letter opener
29 Numbered book part
32 Unctuous flattery
33 Ad ___ committee
36 "All in the Family" creator Norman
37 Roof gutter place
38 "Surf" selection
39 Awaiting delivery?
40 Russian emperor who died at 14
43 Calgary ___ (beer/tomato juice quaffs)
44 Culinary style
45 Apparition, in the U.S.
47 The Keg specialties
48 Sketch without drawing
50 English "j'aime"
51 Moscow tomb occupant
55 Small amount
58 Sort
59 "Grease" girl Sandra ___
60 Ending for scap or spat

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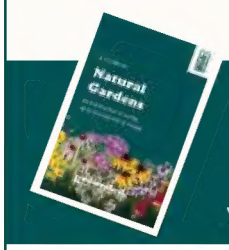

For a free guide to natural gardens in Haliburton County, visit groundedgardens.ca.

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HALIBURTON FISH HATCHERY
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Rainbow Trout for Pond Stocking Available Early May!

Looking to stock your pond this spring? Our healthy, high-quality Rainbow Trout will be ready early May at just $3 per fish.

You can purchase:
Online: www.hhoa.on.ca/fundraisers/rainbow-trout-for-sale/
By Phone: 705-457-966 on Wednesdays between 9am–3pm

Stock is limited, reserve yours today!

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